IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 21, 23, 25 and 26 as follows:

21. (Twice Amended) A compactor wheel mountable on an axle of a compaction machine, said compactor wheel comprising:

a hub mountable to an axle of a compaction machine having a body;

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge, said hub being mountable to the axle of the compaction machine so that said outer circumferential edge faces away from the body of the compaction machine;

a plurality of compaction cleats circumferentially spaced on, transversely spaced across and mounted to said face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge, with said cleat-free area being wide enough that, when said compactor wheel is mounted on the axle of the compaction machine, cable, rope and wire refuse will be at least substantially inhibited from being directed toward and end up wrapped around the axle of the compaction machine on which said compactor wheel is mounted, wherein the rate of buildup of such refuse between said compactor wheel and the body of the compaction machine is at least reduced.

23. (Twice Amended) A compaction machine comprising:

a body suitable for compacting refuse, said body having opposite sides;

an axle having two ends and mounting said body; and

a compactor wheel mounted on each end of said axle, one compactor wheel on each side of said body, said compactor wheel comprising:

a hub mountable to said axle;

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge, said inner circumferential edge being closer to said body than said outer circumferential edge;

a plurality of tooth-shaped compaction cleats circumferentially spaced on,

transversely spaced across and mounted to said face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge, with said cleat-free area being wide enough that cable, rope or wire refuse will be at least substantially inhibited from being directed toward and end up wrapped around said axle of said compaction machine such that the rate of buildup of such refuse between said compactor wheel and said body is at least reduced.

25. (Twice Amended) A compaction machine comprising:

a body suitable for compacting refuse, said body having opposite sides;

two axles, each axle having two ends and mounting said body; and

a compactor wheel mounted on each end of each of said axles, each said compactor wheel comprising:

a hub mountable to said axle;

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge, said hub being mounted on said axle so that said inner circumferential edge is closer to said body than said outer circumferential edge;

a plurality of compaction cleats circumferentially spaced on, transversely spaced across and mounted to said face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge, with said cleat-free area being wide enough to at least substantially inhibit cable, rope or wire refuse from being directed toward and end up wrapped around said axle of said compaction machine, wherein the rate of buildup of such refuse on said axle, between said compactor wheel and said body, is at least reduced.

26. (Amended) A method of making a compactor wheel for a compaction machine having a body, said method comprising:

providing a compactor wheel rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an

outer circumferential edge, with a plurality of compaction cleats being mounted so as to be circumferentially spaced on and transversely spaced across the face of the rim and a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around the rim, on the face, that extends widthwise from said inner edge across the rim toward the outer edge, wherein the cleat-free area is wide enough that cable, rope and wire refuse are substantially inhibited from being directed toward and end up wrapped around the axle of the compaction machine, between the compactor wheel and the body of the compaction machine.

Please cancel claims 24, 27 and 28, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add new claims 29-31, as follows:

29. (New) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 23, wherein said cleat-free area extends widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge up to about 10 inches.

30. (New) A wheel assembly for a compacting machine having a frame and a pair of axle assemblies mounted to the frame, comprising:

a cylindrical drum mountable for rotation on each of an opposing end of at least one of the axle assembly, said cylindrical drums being positioned on opposite sides of the frame, each of said cylindrical drums defining an inner periphery adjacent the frame and an outer periphery:

a plurality of teeth disposed circumferentially about each of the cylindrical drums, said teeth extending outwardly from the cylindrical drums a preselected distance and being disposed in a plurality of axially spaced rows with the outermost of said rows being positioned immediately adjacent the outer periphery of the each cylindrical drum and the innermost of said rows being spaced from the inner periphery a preselected distance.

31. (New) The wheel assembly as set forth in claim 30 wherein an upstanding flange is connected to the inner periphery of each cylindrical drum and extends radially outwardly therefrom a preselected distance.